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SOURCE

1. Up until at least 1940, the University of Saransk had two sections; a two-year course for teachers of students up to twelve years of age, and a five-year course for teachers of students from 12 to 18 years of age. There were about 1500 in the two-year course and about 3500 in the five-year course. Student teachers were allowed to select one of the following as a major: physics, mathematics, history, chemistry, languages, geography, biology, Russian language and literature, and general. About 35% of the students selected either physics or mathematics. The university building, of four or five floors, covered an area about 0.5 kilometer by 0.5 kilometer.
2. The students came from farms and villages within three-to-four hundred kilometers of Saransk. Prospective students had to show a birth certificate, a village government statement concerning suitability as a student, certificates of completion from each school attended, and a suitability statement from each school attended. If there was a hint of other than good Communist background, the student was refused admittance.
3. Students were given an allowance by the State of 120 to 150 rubles, depending on the grades obtained. This money was insufficient for books, room, board and necessities and most students obtained extra money from their families. About 25% of the students worked at the railroad station, as street cleaners, and taught elementary grades at nearby schools, for additional money. The students attended classes from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and it was usually necessary to study an additional six to eight hours. Consequently, working students had a difficult time maintaining a creditable record. The State allowance was discontinued in 1939 and I heard that about 25% of the students left school.
4. There were 30 to 40 students in each class. The professors were aloof and cared little about the progress of individual students. The lectures were formal and were delivered at the level of the average student. All students took voluminous notes. In the laboratory courses there were one or two assistants who carried out the experiments with all students observing and making notes. There was insufficient equipment for the students to make individual experiments before mid-1938, but thereafter the quantity of laboratory equipment increased considerably.

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5. There were several types of examinations. About once a week, each student had to answer one question orally in class. Quarterly examinations covered all the instruction received during that period. Annual examinations took about a week, with one day devoted to each subject. A final comprehensive examination, over a two-week period, both oral and written, covered all subjects studied in the University. I believe about five to 10 percent of each class failed the quarterly examinations. Repeating the course was not required for graduation if the student could still pass the annual and final examinations. Three class hours a week were devoted to political subjects and failures were treated the same as in other courses. A class roll call was not taken and students were allowed to skip any classes as long as the examinations were passed.
6. All textbooks were in the Russian language and as far as I knew, were written by Soviet authors. There was a plentiful supply of all the technical books. Students in history, geography, and economics had to share their books.
7. There was a shortage of professors in Saransk and most [redacted] also taught in other schools in Saransk. I believe the professors were paid from 1200 to 1500 rubles per month for work at the University.

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